

When you hear of famous men and women coming to Jesus, what is your feeling? When you hear of a Rock Star placing his/her faith in Jesus, how does that touch you? When Chuck Colson, of the Watergate Fame during Nixon's presidency, placed his trust in Jesus, some felt that it was to make his sentence light. Reports of "foxhole" conversions or deathbed conversions may leave us uneasy. Why?

While working at a church on Long Island, New York, on New Year's Eve—year after year, a man gave the same testimony of God's saving him while fighting in a foxhole in Korea. While a good story of great importance to him, in reality, he never left the foxhole.

Saul proved to be different! He stayed in Damascus for a few days and while there, at once, he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. Must have shook up the leaders and all who heard him. They sure were not expecting to hear that from Saul! They were EXPECTING to hear Saul hit the Way really hard! They were confused, I am sure. They were out for Christian blood and they heard only of the Blood of Jesus and that Blood was to save them from their sins.

In fact, the main message and the ONLY message Saul was speaking of was that of the Messiahship of Jesus. This Historical Jesus becomes central to his teaching. Saul consistently argues that Jesus is the

Messiah and boldly teaches that He is the only source of Salvation.

The difference in Saul was seen and heard by all. He was, after all, filled with the Holy Spirit and that made all the difference!

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a strange event nor is it only for a few nor is it only for those in the New Testament times. A reason for some misunderstanding in this area may be that people have never been told they could be filled with God's Holy Spirit. Another reason may not be that is because we refuse it. Or at least, disregard the importance of depending on the Spirit of God for every day life and living.

Sadly, few in the Church universal are so filled with His Holy Spirit. God is looking for such a person. Being Filled with the Holy Spirit was like Stephen was. He was living his life to the fullest and with the Holy Spirit's control. He was able to minister in the fullness of God's control and without fear.

What is "Being Filled With the Spirit"? It speaks of Christian growth and ministry!

Take a look at what Paul writes in [EPH 5:18](#). Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Paul uses a word phrase that means "*Be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit.*" That means, I would guess, that this filling should repeatedly be happening to Christians. A growing Believer is a Believer who is growing in the likeness of Jesus day in and

day out. As in the life of a child, the little one does not stay little for long. There is growth and it is expected that the baby grows. If not, there is much concern! Why is it any different with the Spiritual baby? Once a child, doing things only a child could do, but then, by growing up in Jesus, the growing young person takes on more responsibility and challenges as he matures in his faith. And when that happens, there is a fullness of the Holy Spirit's work in that person so that it results in renewal worship and thanksgiving as found in

**EPH 5:19-20**

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this renewal does not stop with that! There is a growth in a renewal in relationships to others, especially those in authority over us or those under our authority. See examples in **EPH 5:21-6:9**

**Changed Families; relationship restored.**

Since the Holy Spirit is the One who sets us apart for His Glory and work, or sanctifies us, such a filling will often result in increased sanctification. And since that is true, we must recognize that He is the One who empowers us for Christian service and gives us spiritual gifts. Such a filling of His Spirit would effect our increased power for ministry and increased efficiency in the use of the Spiritual Gifts He has given to all of us!

Being so filled with the Spirit of God can be what is needed during a very stressful time; the time of deep persecution, Grief. Depending on His Grace and Power.

"*After they prayed*" is the phrase that Dr. Luke uses and then, after, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. God delights in His people's praise of Him. He blesses those who call on His Name. When we do that in heart felt praise, He visits us with His Spirit. MATT. 18:20 "*For where two or three come together in My Name, there am I with them.*"

If we need to pray to ask God to be with us, why is it strange that we cannot ask Him to fill us for special tasks? It is appropriate to understand that filling with the Holy Spirit not as a one-time event, but as an event that can occur over and over again in your Christian walk of faith. (ACTS 4:8; 7:55) It may also be the characteristic of a life surrendered to Jesus (ACTS 6:3; 11:24).

Some have said that a glass of water is a good illustration of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Note that once it is full, it cannot be MORE full. A glass is not a human. Either is the next example but it fits better. A balloon is better. Air is added, it takes shape, more air is added, it gets bigger, as air leaves, it changes size.

Even Jesus depended on this filling. It was only Jesus Himself whom the Father gave the Spirit without measure (JOHN 3:34 *For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.*). And He

also felt the Power leave Him when the lady touched Him.

Maybe the conflict is with the wording. Maybe such a phrase as "a new fullness of the Holy Spirit" or "a new empowering for ministry" or even "a significant step in growth" in a life might be better. The idea is the same: more of God; more of His Power; more of Him and less of me.

So may people in my circle of relationships do not have a dramatic experience like the Road to Damascus. But those same people have begun to experience new freedoms and joy in worship, to use a wider variety of spiritual gifts. Sometimes, the gift of speaking in tongues and the gifts of interpretation have been used as well, but in other cases they have not. All for His Glory!

How is it done? What are the steps? Is there a list somewhere I can check off? Yes and no. There needs to be a heart that the Lord has prepared for spiritual renewal. THAT comes by sincere repentance and renewed commitment to Christ.

There is nothing wrong to ask to be filled with God' Spirit. Don't you want more of Him? Don't you want to be used more effectively in His Work of the Gospel? We need to learn how to pray and to seek this greater infilling of the Holy Spirit of God and expect the Lord to give an outpouring of more spiritual gifts in the lives of our people. His Word approves a general longing

for greater power in ministry and a greater joy in worship.

A need of mine and possibly yours, is;

- to **yield** my life fully to God
- To depend fully on God for power to live the Christian life
- To **obey** the Lord's commands in our lives
- To pray that the Holy Spirit would fill us, in accordance with the will of God as expressed in **EPH 5:18**.

Want to join in this? You might have to be let down a wall in a basket but it will hold you as it did Saul. Trust Him to fill in the blanks.

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Taken strongly from Wayne A. Grudem's book, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, IVP, Leiceste, England, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.